### ACROSS THE NEW YORK FOOTLIGHTS By GEORGE JEAN NATHAN.

In every American city enjoying a population of sufficient size to warrant more than one letter carrier, one hakery-wagon boy and two professional drunkards, there is to be found a collection of individuals who mest every few weeks in some one's front parlor and simultaneously have a plate of ice creamy and take and an ambition to improve the drams. The majority of these confgresses refer to themselves by the name of "Stage Societies." Things have come to the point, indeed, where one of these stage societies is as much a part of the life of an American village as a framed spila lithograph of the Collsoum, a phonograph record of Tosti's "Goodbye," and the belief that Mary Pickford makes \$500,000 a year.

Not to fall behind such metropoll as Oggrunts Falls and Appelgate Corners, New York has also come to the front with a production upon the electric-lighted promontory of the Galety Theater of a play by a Mr. Daniel Garretson called "The Soul Machine" is a more york Stage Society Lodge MMDCXI believes to upliff or otherwise improve the native platform with such a piay as "The Soul Machine" is some weath a piay as a "The Soul Machine" is some what uneasy of appreciation. That is, what manary of appreciation. That is, what measy of appreciation. That is, where the province of the profession and the stage entrance of I would be therefore a metropolity and the stage entrance of I would be therefore a metropolity of the profession and the stage entrance of I would be therefo

a play as "The Soul Machine" is some-what uneasy of appreciation. That is, of course, granting this to be the pur-pose of the organization in point. It may be that the New York Stage So-ciety has no such notion in its cona play as "The Soul Machine" is someciety has no such notion in its con-stitution. It may, in faith, be merely a joy ciub or a dance-verein, a gatha joy club or a dance-verein, a gathering of congenial souls out for a high rold time who chanced accidentally to call themselves a stage society for want of a catchier name. But, not being privy to other purposes, it remains only to take the organization diterally and, so taking it, to approach its public manifestations with a professional theatrical eye. fessional theatrical eye.
"The Soul Machine," though credit-

upon the play bill to the male ned above, is—at least according to Broadway bookmakers who have laid odds of one hundred to one on the dark horse—a product of the pen of Augustus Thomas. Whether or not Mr. Thomas is actually the chef of the companies. the composition, one cannot with further definiteness say. Yet so many are the typical Thomaseries of the play, so seemingly obvious the givelous take meto the fathering of the place may be indorsed with some conviction. Basically, the play exhem the scientific deals of the play exhem the scientific deals. ally, the play echoes the scientific de-tective fictions begun some fifteen years ago in the Strand Magazine by a couple of cleverly minded Englishmen and since pursued, five or six years back, Balmer and McHarg in Hampton's and, currently, in divers journals by Ar-thur B. Reeve. The natures of these fic-tions, the most recent of which reflect the classroom addresses of such professors of the occult as Herr Munsterberg. sors of the occult as Herr Munsterberg, of Harvard, is familiar to my flock. Some one, so goes the recipe, is suspected of somethins. The regular minions of the law are baffled. Comes then into the case one Rupert the Wise, a fellow of science. Rupert attaches to the nose of the suspect a malodorometer, which is to say a baking-powder can filled with schence. Rupert attaches to the nose of the suspect a mail of the suspect a mail of ormation," a pair of black and white say a baking-powder can filled with a mixture of carbolic acid. Port Salut cheese, perforated Bermuda onions and Jockey Club perfume. The suspect, influenced psychologically by the compound and unable to resist the metaphysical power of its lumes, thereupon betrays his guilt by twitching his left ear.

Garnishing a scientific triumph of this Garnishing as cientific triumph of this Garnishing a scientific triumph of this

species with a deal of muddy lecturing on allied subjects, the author of the Stage Society's exhibit has given birth to a melodrama that reveals little else than a hand skilled in the externals of play-making. The affair is filled with much opaque bosh and its rostrum animadver-sions upon various phases of hypnotism and such like amusements are, to say the least, suspiciously spoofish. For example, the play divulges an instance of long-distance hypnotism that tickles the ribs even more wholesomely than the youcan't-pull-that-tragger whilling was not witching Hour." Certainly, this was not meant seriously by the author. Indeed, there are several points in the play that increase the conviction that the composi-tion was intended as an experiment upon the public, an effort to determine for once and all just how much hocus-pocus it would stand. There is one scene in the piece that

There is one scene in the piece that contains good melodrama material of the patent kind, this the scene wherein the "Soul Machine," or so-called psychometer, is demonstrated. The flicker of m as gradually it betrays the villain's unwilling reaction to certain guilt-fasten-ing words massages the average spine with the proper degree of impressiveness. But the balance of the script is merely windy. Among the feats performed by the cast, in addition to the long-distance hypnotism coup already aligned to the hypnotism coup already alluded to, is the dreaming by a man's sister of the fellow's death at the very moment he has breathed his last, to say nothing of a side dish to the dream in which the psychic baggage enjoys a vision of the murderer whom (Feat No. 2) she later recognizes on the streets of New York.
The brother (Feat No. 3), having been done to death in Milwaukee. Besides these julcy specimens of the imagination. there is a succulent ado over auras, male and female. One cannot, to repeat, mistake the Thomas touch, or influence. There is in

Thomas touch, or influence. There is in the piece all the empty profundity, the obscure dialectic, the poutar-pigeon learning, to which we have grown accustomed in the later works of this misguided dramatist—a dramatist of so keen a skill in play-building that it is something of a pity he has not contented himself with aiming merely to compose agreeable theatrical pastimes in lieu of these dramas in whose theses he is inthing of a pity he has not contented, himself with alming merely to compose agreeable theatrical pastimes in lieu of these dramas in whose theses he is insufficiently learned and practiced. The cast which presented "The Soul Machine" included Vincent Serrano, Eugene O'Brien, Bennett Southard, Helen Robertson, Edith Luckett and Jane Harburg. The physical, if not the psychical, phases of the production were managed with a sufficient measure of adrottness. If these Stage Societies desire to accomplish anything for the native theater, however, let them have done with the promulgation of such stuffs as "The Soul Machine" and dig down into the trunks of such neglected and talented writers for the theater as Tom Barry, Zoe Akins and the like. Meeting in front parlors and dabbling with orangeices is one thing. Producing "Soul Machines" is one thing. But helping the American stage is yet another thing.

The holiday upon the stage of the Empire is being celebrated, as custom holds, with Barrie's rare weave, "Peter Pan." I have, in the ten years since its initial presentation, written often and much of this eerie and joyful play-but never have I been able so aptly to cast its spirit into type as now my rotund friend. Robert Hobart Davis, kaiser-in-chief of the publications of the House of Munsey, has contrived to cast it. Bob Davis, as the world more familiarly knows the men, upon the opening of the play the other night, sent to Maude Adams a letter. This letter, which till now no one but Davis, the lady herself and I have iaid eyes upon, conveys so happily the feeling which "Peter Pan" and its principal exponent spread, like chiffon rosemary, over an audience of sere and cynic souls—it has in it so nicely a critique of the work—that I am gratified to have used my witchcraft successfully against its scrivener and by such foul means to have persuaded him to permit me to give it to you. The letter:

Dear Peter Pan: Every year I wait for you to come back to New York. My folks

Please remember Peter, play your very best because I told my pal that you were the greatest actor in the world

well. I suppose you're busy getting

My pal asks me to send you his love but I told him he can't do that 'less he seen you act and an I have saw you I send mine instead. Hopin you'll fly over as suggested, I

(Signed) ROBERT H. DAVIS.
P. S.—When you hear that heart stop beatin, it's mine and you can start it up again by just one little kind look. (Signed) BOB DAVIS. P. P. S.—I'll be wearin a black su't of clothes, white shirt, white cravat and patent leather shoes (you can't see 'em but you can hear 'em.) You can't mistake me. (Signed) BOB.

(Signed) B. At the Princess Theater, a musical entertainment is derived from Philip Bartholomae's farce "Over Night." The production is sponsored by the Marbury-Comstock Company and contains a measure of lilting, if already familiar, and the state of measure of lilting, if already familiar, syncopation, together with some rather jocose gymnastics by John Hazzard, a very pretty face by Alice Dovey, some eye-piquing costumes from the hand of Melville Ellis and from the mill of Hickson, several pinchable ladies in and out of the chorus, a sorry Ford jest, a sport shirt, a burlesque scene from Marle Cahill's last season's failure Ninety in the Shade" a song from Elsie Janis's this season's failure "Miss Information," a pair of black and white checkered spats, a number of melodies not act and msny a time faither has hed not act and msny a time faither has hed

# INFANT PRODIGY SAYS SHE WAS BORN THAT WAY

Previous to that I was banished to the territory outlying New York and Illinois, because the law would not permit me to appear in either of those States.

"How did I happen to be an infant prodigy? It was the most natural thing in the world. I guess I was born that way. My father and mother and two sisters were all performers, my father, Caro Miller, having been on the stage since he was a boy. He was living in Findiay, Ohio, when the juvenile 'Pinafore' craze first swept the country from ocean to ocean and. possessing a good ocean to ocean and, possessing a good voice, he ran away from home and joined one of those organizations, singing the role of Sir Joseph Porter. That, I bolieve, was the beginning of our career on the stage. By and by, after he had become of age and was then an estab-lished performer, he married and when insted performer, he married and when my two sisters came and they grew old enough they were added to the act, which was called "The Columbian Four." My sister Ruth was a wonderful soft shoe dancer and was called 'the female George Primrose.' Claire, the other, was also a very clever dancer, but her real forte was the piano.

"When I was born, however, there was

When I was born, however, there was never any thought of my going on the stage. My home, by the way, was in Evansville, Ind., and not Findlay, Ohio. As soon as I was old enough I was bundied up and taken along with the act. One day I saw a moving picture of a Russian ballet dancer and I was so impressed with the work of this woman that I began imitating her. Of course, I had seen my sisters dance on the stage, but they never seemed to make the same

"They encouraged my efforts and as I persisted mother made a crinoline skirt for me and my debut occurred on August 20, 1908, at Lake Side Park, Dayton, Ohio,

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## THEATRICAL BRIEFS.

ment of Poli's Theater this week. Mr. Cone, who has been the manager for the last six months, leaves this morning in his atuomobile for New Haven, Conn., the head office of the Poli organization.

Mary Nash head.

Mary Nash has been engaged by Klaw and Erlanger and George C. Tyler to create the leading role in "The Ohio Lady," the new play by Booth Tarking-ton and Julian Street.

When Henry W. Savage produced "Along Came Ruth," at the Olympic Theater, Chicago, the title role, which is to be played this week by Florence Rittenhouse, was enacted by Florence Shireley, the attractive little leading woman

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AMUSEMENTS.

"So now that I am 18-I feel like a grandmother. I hope no one will call me a prodigy. I'm just a plain little girl who dances because she loves to,"

Plum' was dropped and we were then billed as 'The Five Columbians.'

London to appear in a big revue, but sister Ruth married shortly after we arrived, as did sister Claire. That is how it came about that I danced alone in London and had the good fortune to meet

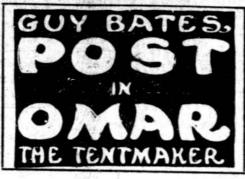
Mr. Lee Shubert.

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